

ANNALS OF CAMDEN

No. 3

1921

BY
CHARLES S. BOYER



View of Camden Water Front in 1850

ANNALS OF CAMDEN .

No. 3

OLD FERRIES CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE CAMDEN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BY

CHARLES S. BOYER

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OLD FERRIES

CAMDEN, N. J.

In this age of inventions, improvements and ever-changing modes of transportation, the ferry boat is still an important factor in carrying the traveller across that "goodly and noble" river which forms the boundary between the two Quaker Colonies of New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Philadelphia, although founded several years after the first settlers had arrived in West Jersey, soon became the chief town in the Western World and the trend of travel, which it was originally expected would be towards Burlington, soon led in that direction. The demand for transportation facilities over the Delaware river was a natural sequence of the influx of settlers into the lower part of West Jersey; many of the newer arrivals had friends, or relatives in the metropolis and all of them had business relations with its merchants. Animated by the same spirit which led these yeomen of Yorkshire and London to forsake their comfortable homes and seek new habitations in the wilderness of America, they attacked the problem and found its solution in a legally sanctioned ferry, which, while privately operated, was even at this early day subject to public regulation.

The first ferry between New Jersey and Philadelphia was sanctioned in 1688 by the County Court of Gloucester. The order of the Court was:

"Therefore we permit and appoint that a common passage or ferry for man and beast be provided, fixed and settled in some convenient and proper place between ye mouths or entrance of Cooper's creek and Newton creek, and that the government, managing and keeping of ye same be committed to ye said William Roydon and his assigns, who are hereby empowered and appointed to establish, fix and settle ye same within ye limits aforesaid, wherein all other persons are desired and requested to keep no other common or public passage or ferry."

William Roydon, the first ferryman, was enjoined to provide good and sufficient boats which were "to be in readiness at all times to accommodate people's actions." The rates were fixed at six pence per head for each person, twelve pence for man and horse, or other beast, and six pence per head for swine, cattle and sheep.

There is a great deal of confusion in tracing the various ferries between Camden and Philadelphia. In Pennsylvania, the Proprietary Governor, at first, claimed the right of granting ferry privileges, but this was steadily resisted by the City Council of Philadelphia, and the latter was finally conceded the authority. In West Jersey, the Gloucester County Court early exercised the prerogative, as has been noted in the authority given William Roydon. Since the ferries required landings on both sides of the river, and each State exercised the right within its own limits, it very often happened that the ferry was known by one name in Pennsylvania and by another in New Jersey. They most often took the names of the proprietors of the hotels adjacent to their landings, for it should be remembered that ferry rights were considered a profitable adjunct to the hotels, which on the Camden side, were all located on the river bank. Another factor causing confusion in distinguishing between the ferries was the similarity of names of the several ferry masters.

The first ferry slips were very primitive affairs, without waiting rooms for the accommodation of the public, or coverings of any kind over the slips. In later years, rough board sheds were erected and provided with a stove in the middle of the room, around which the half frozen ferrymen with their strong cigars, or rank pipes, would huddle. It was, therefore, easy to understand why the old hotels became so popular and left such an indelible impression upon the early travelers who were compelled to wait for the arrival or departure of one of the ferry boats.

Connected with each ferry, and about midway between the slips and hotels, were large stables and sheds for the accommodation of the farmers when bringing their products to the Philadelphia markets, for at first the ferry facilities for horses and wagons were crude, uncertain and expensive and this marketing was usually carried across the river in baskets. There was at each ferry also a large piece of ground covered with shade trees and fitted up with various sorts of amusements and the indispensable bar or bars, at which both soft and hard drinks could be obtained on tickets furnished by the proprietor, or assistant, upon the payment of a fee for the privilege of playing at any one of the games then in vogue at such places.

When the original ferry privilege was granted, the Gloucester Court as already noted, established the rates to be charged, but these were soon ignored and the ferryman exacted all he could out of his passengers.

From a charge of six pence for a single passenger and twelve

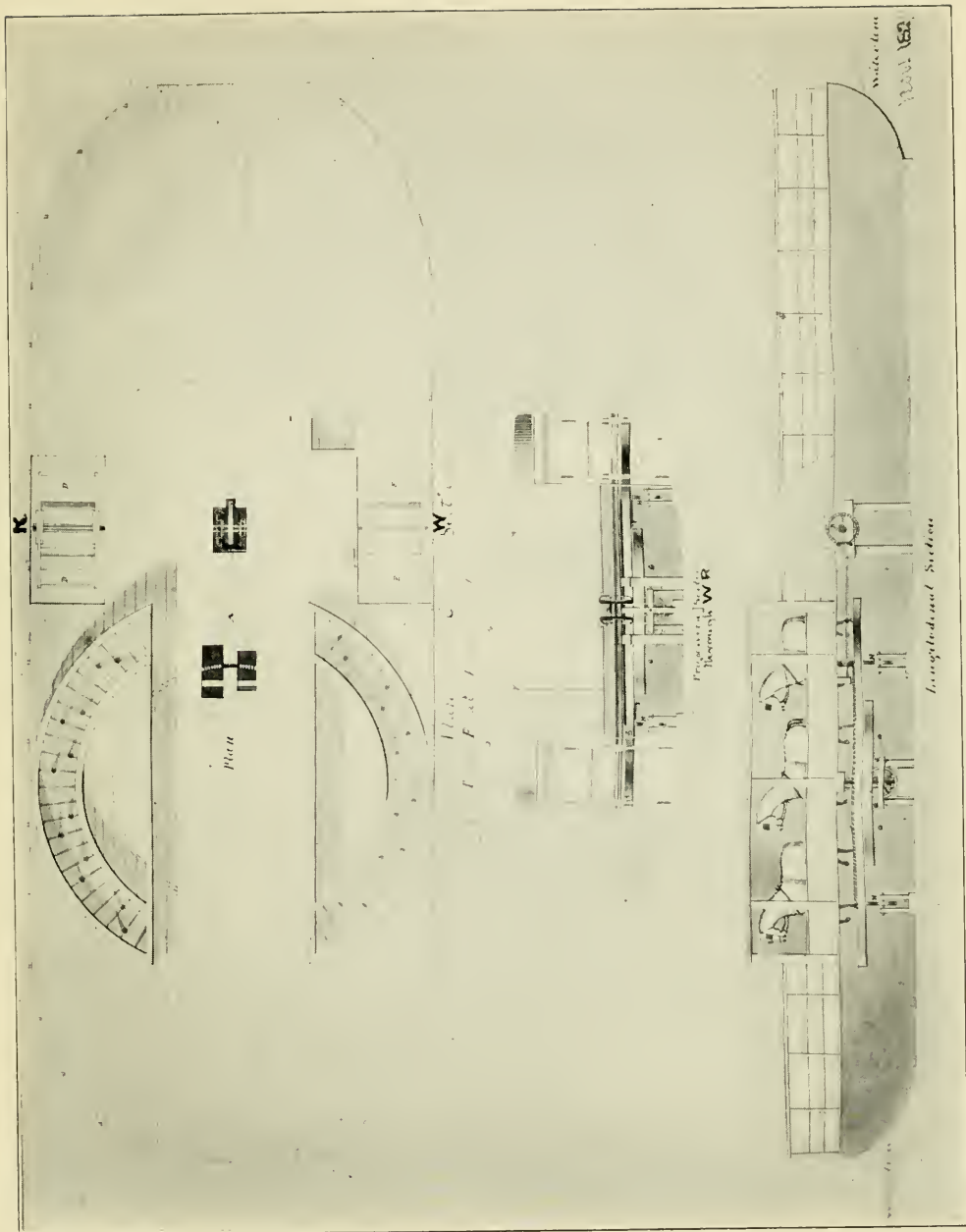
pence for a man and horse, the toll was gradually raised to nine pence and two-shillings-six pence respectively. These advances caused a protest from the traveling public without securing any relief from the ferry masters. The matter was then taken to the Legislature, but the ferry interests were powerful enough to prevent any immediate action being taken. The ferry situation is interestingly shown in the letter addressed by Samuel and William Cooper, in 1782, to the members of the Legislature from Gloucester County in defense of their position.* In this letter are given the old and new rates of fare and the former and present cost of operation, as follows:

RATES OF FARE	PRESENT	FORMERLY
A single passenger.....	£0-0-9	£0-0-6
Two or more passengers, each.....	0-6	0-4
A single man and horse.....	2-6	1-6
Two or more men and horses, each	2-0	1-0
Single cattle	3-0	1-6
Two or more cattle, each.....	2-6	1-0
Dead "Hoggs"	0-6	0-4
Sheep, each	0-4	0-2
Live "Hoggs," each.....	0-8	0-4
Calves, each	0-6	0-4
Beef per quarter.....	0-6	0-4
A two horse load of fish.....	3-9	2-6
All empty carriages per wheel.....	1-6	1-0
Lumber per thousand.....	6-0	6-0
A full barrel or chest.....	1-0	0-8
A full hogshead.....	3-9	2-6
Grain or salt per bushel.....	0-4	0-2
Flour per centum.....	0-6	0-4
Iron per ton.....	7-6	5-0
Hen "coobs" in proportion to size		
EXPENSES	£ S D	£ S D
Ferryman's wages per month.....	5 0 0	2 0 0
New horse boat.....	60 0 0	28 0 0
New wherry	40 0 0	22 0 0
Oars per feet.....	0 1 0	0 0 4
Sails per "sute," wherry.....	7 0 10	2 0 0
Sails per "sute," horse boat	18 0 0	6 0 0
Boat builders wages per day.....	0 15 0	0 6 0

* See Dr. C. E. Godfrey in *Pennsylvania Magazine*, Vol. XXIX (1905), p. 503.

No immediate action was taken by the Legislature towards regulating the ferry charges, but in 1799 the entire question of supervision and control over the ferries was placed in the hands of the local Boards of Chosen Freeholders. As the latter bodies were even more susceptible to manipulation and influence by the ferry masters and hotel keepers, a long-suffering public was compelled to wait for many years before any relief was secured, at least in Gloucester County. In the meantime, the ferry charges had been gradually increased without any material increase in the service rendered. So arbitrary and grasping, however, did the ferry masters become, that, on May 9, 1821, the Board of Freeholders of Gloucester County was forced to take notice of the many protests and did finally pass a law minutely regulating the maximum rates which could be legally collected by the ferrymen. Among the rates specified was a charge of six and one-quarter cents "for each passenger, including the privilege of carrying three baskets, or what is equivalent thereto." The ferrymen were permitted to collect double this rate between the first day of December and the first day of March. These charges were also soon forgotten and the rate of fare became twelve and one-half cents in the Summer and twenty-five cents in Winter. About 1830, the seasons were further divided and the Summer rate was made six and one-quarter cents, the Spring and Fall charge was twelve and one-half cents, while in Winter the rate was twenty-five cents, but for those persons living in Camden, or for any one living in Philadelphia and following a regular business in Camden, the fare was one dollar per quarter. These persons were known as "Quarterly Passengers." The crafty ferrymen always collected the fares from his passengers before the boat left its landing. "Quarterly Passengers" were compelled to wait until some countryman came along with marketing and the cash fare before the ferryman would start a boat. After the cash passenger was aboard the quarterly passengers in sufficient numbers to fill the boat would be accommodated.

The travel across the Delaware in these early days was carried on in long wherries, holding twelve to fifteen persons, and propelled by sails and oars. The boats had sharp bows decked over for a few feet back from the stem and provided with iron shod "skids," or runners, on either side of the keel, and in every case with a long rope attached to the bow. During the Winter Season, the passage across the river was often a long, tedious and laborious trip. At that season of the year the boats were usually maneuvered by four men, one sitting on the deck with a boat hook in hand, two others at the



Plan of a team-boat used on the Delaware River made by J. C. Trautwine in 1828

Courtesy of Mr. John C. Trautwine, Jr.

oars and the fourth man at the helm. If the ice in the river was strong enough to bear the boats, they were, with the assistance of the male passengers, who were pressed into service, pulled out of the water and dragged along over the ice. This was a more or less dangerous operation, the boatmen frequently getting an unwelcome plunge into the icy water, while sometimes a passenger, or boatman, or both, were drowned. Elizabeth Drinker cites an accident of this sort which occurred on February 10, 1782, when "four or five persons were drowned crossing ye River, pushing ye Boat off ye Ice into ye water."

There was also another class of boats, called "horse boats." These were much larger than the wherries, more like the present-day scows, and were for the transportation of horses, carriages and cattle. It was only under favorable conditions that these crafts made the trips, as they were very unwieldy and could be operated only when the wind was favorable.

The next advancement was the "team boat," a much larger craft, in which horses or mules furnished the motive power. They were of two kinds. In one, four or five horses were placed on each side of the boat on a circular tread wheel, and the paddle wheels, arranged like the "side wheel" steamboat of later days, were turned by means of cogs and gearing connected with other cogs on the shaft of the paddle wheels. The horses were hitched to strong timbers and by a forward movement of the feet caused the tread wheel upon which they stood to revolve and thus operate the gear wheels. The other type of "team boat" had a large revolving wheel in the middle and the horses, which were attached to it, by walking around in a circle, caused this wheel to revolve and through gears rotated the paddle, or bucket, wheels. The "team boat" of this style consisted of two complete hulls, united by a deck or bridge, but separated far enough apart to allow the paddle wheel to be set between them. They were sharp at both ends and could be propelled either backward or forward with equal ease. The "team boat" ferries were very popular and received the greater attention, first, because they were thought to be more economical to operate than any other type of ferry boat; and second, because of the exclusive rights to steam as the motive power claimed under the Fulton-Livingston patents.

The first steamboat to be propelled by steam to cross the Delaware river was the "Camden," built in 1810.* Her engine, a horizontal

* Fidler, p. 23, Wescott & Scharf, Vol. III, p. 2137; Judge P. J. Gray in "The Camden Mail," July 23, 1845.

one, was built by Daniel Large, of Philadelphia, who with Joseph Bispham and several others operated the boat from the Middle Ferry (at the foot of Cooper street) to the slip at the lower side of High (Market) street, Philadelphia. It was a small undecked boat with side wheels, or paddles, and was used for passengers only. This was followed by others as will be noted later on.

All of these early steam-boats were without cabins and were very small and of slow speed. Wood was used to generate steam, the boilers being exposed to the weather at all times. The pilot, or steersman, as he was then called, stood upon an elevated bench on the deck so as to enable him to see over the heads of the passengers, and controlled the boat by a long wooden, or iron, tiller. It was not until about 1835 that any of the ferry boats were provided with cabins.

These primitive crafts used to come to the landing places "side-wise" instead of "end to," as is now the case.

The following notice which appeared in "The Pennsylvania Gazette" of March 5, 1761, will give a good idea of the means of communication between West Jersey and Philadelphia in the early days:

"As the *Mayor and Corporation* of the City of Philadelphia have been pleased to grant me the Privilege of a FERRY, now carried on from the lower end of Arch-Street, at the Sign of The BOY AND BOAT, to the two Ferries of Messieurs COOPER'S, in New-Jersey, directly opposite to this, I beg leave to inform the PUBLIC, that I have built a large, commodious House for the Entertainment of all Travellers, with Out-houses and Stores; also a Number of well built Boats, calculated and fitted for a Ferry. And for accommodation of those who shall be pleased to favour me with their Custom, I have also added to my old Wharff a new Slip, which extends between 40 and 50 Feet out in Delaware, to Low-water Mark, and have fixed a Pair of Steps to the Side of my Wharff, which makes Landing, any Time of Tide, safe and pleasant for Passengers, easy for Carriages, Horses, Hogsheads, Barrels, or any Merchandize. The Out-houses and Stores are particularly intended for the Use and Security of the Goods of Market People. Dispatch, Industry and great Care, with due Attendance, will be given by SAMUEL AUSTIN, at the NEW FERRY-HOUSE."

Samuel Austin was succeeded by his son, William* described

* Samuel Cooper of Cooper's Point gives an interesting account of "Bill" Austin and 23 others fitting out a foraging expedition which put into Duck Creek and secured 200 barrels of flour. Before they got out of the creek, however, they were overtaken by the Militia and all but four of the party were killed. Penna. Magazine of History, Vol. X, p. 36.

as a yeoman, who, in 1778, was proclaimed a traitor to the popular cause. This ferry, in various accounts, is designated the "New Jersey," "Upper Ferry," or "Cooper's Point Ferry."

At the very beginning of the struggle for freedom, the strategic value of the ferries was recognized by both the civil and military authorities. While the British and Americans were contending for supremacy around New York the following notice appeared in the "New York Gazette" of August 5, 1776,*

"The Public are desired to take Notice, That no Person whatever, either Male or Female, above the age of 14 years will be permitted to pass any of the Ferries in the State of New Jersey, without a proper pass from the Place they leave."

This was followed by a resolution adopted by the State Convention at New Brunswick on August 10, 1776.†

"That to prevent Desertion, no person or persons belonging to, or coming from, the army in the State of New-Jersey, be permitted to go over any of the ferries in, or travel through said State, without a pass signed either by General Mercer, General Dickinson, General Livingston, Colonel Griffin, or Colonel Biddle."

It was further directed that troops in the services of the Colonies, when provided with proper passes, should pay only one-third the ferryage usually paid by such persons as were not in the said service.

The above regulations applied to the entire State, but to make the local situation more secure, as soon as it was thought that the British would move towards Philadelphia, the Pennsylvania Council of Safety adopted stringent orders for the control of the passage across the Delaware, requiring that every person before being permitted to pass over the Ferries with fire-arms must have a special permit from the Council.

Two other resolutions adopted by the Council of Safety in the early part of December, 1776, are worthy of note at this time as they directly bear on the importance attached by the civil authorities to the question of a proper defense of the City of Philadelphia. They were as follows:

"*Resolved*, That the Ferryman of the City & Liberties, do immediately take over to Coopers' Ferries all of their Boats, and the two large flat bottom boats belonging to this State, now at

* See N. J. Archives, 2d Series, Vol. I, p. 160.

† See N. J. Archives, 2d Series, Vol. I, p. 169.

Kensington, under the care of Captain Benjamin Eyre, to transport the Maryland flying Camp across the Delaware to this City.”

“*Resolved*, That Jacob Hinman and John Clew be permitted to continue at the old Ferry, it being expected that troops from New Jersey will Pass over to this City, and that they may be wanted.”

When the British occupied Philadelphia, the ferries afforded an important means of American spies, under the guise of selling produce and farm products, getting into the city, and it became necessary for the English military authorities to adopt similar tactics against the Continentals. This was done in a proclamation issued by order of James Galloway, Superintendent General, on January 15, 1778, according to which only two ferries, known as “the Old and New Ferries in Water-Street, near Arch Street,” were allowed within the environs of Philadelphia, and that,

“no person or persons whatever presume to cross the river to the Jersies, or land from thence, at any other places than the above mentioned ferries, nor cross from these ferries but by virtue of a pass under the hand of one of the magistrates of which the ferry-men and all others are hereby directed to take notice, and govern themselves accordingly, on pain of imprisonment.”*

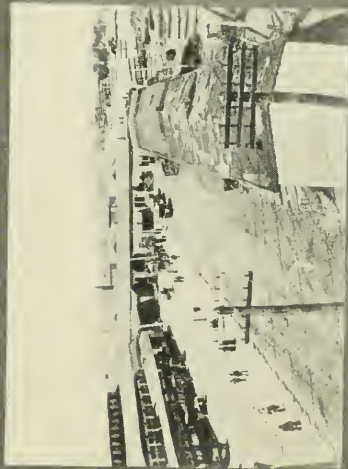
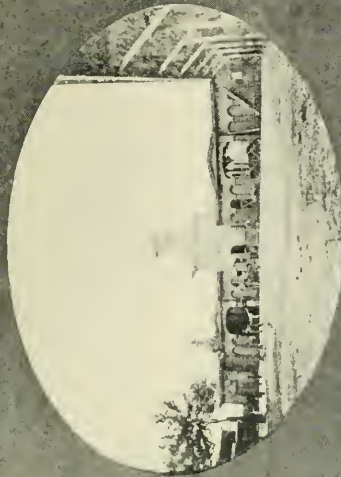
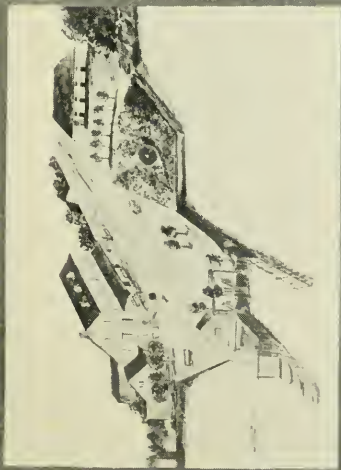
In the early days there were ferry landings on the New Jersey side at Cooper’s Point, at Camden and at Kaighnton, those at Camden being located at Cooper street, Market street and in the vicinity of Federal street. The numerous changes which have taken place all cluster around these points and to-day the ferries are located at some point in each of these divisions.†

Starting at Cooper’s Point, we find that there had been a ferry established there prior to 1708. In that year William Cooper, the emigrant, conveyed to his son, Joseph, a certain tract of land “including the ferry at Cooper’s Point.” The latter conveyed the ferry to his son, Benjamin, in 1728, who operated it until July 1, 1769, when it came into possession of Samuel Cooper. In 1739 Benjamin Cooper was assessed six shillings for the ferrying privilege‡ by the Board of Freeholders of old Gloucester County, and in the same year was granted a license to keep a public house by the Court of

* Pennsylvania Evening Post, Jan. 15, 1778.

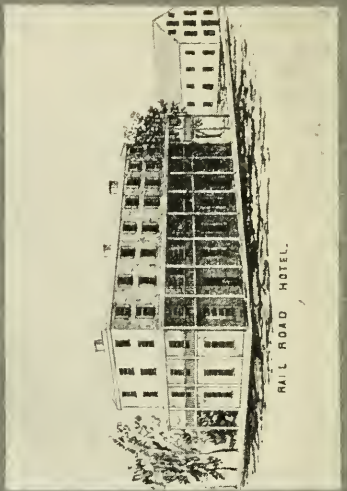
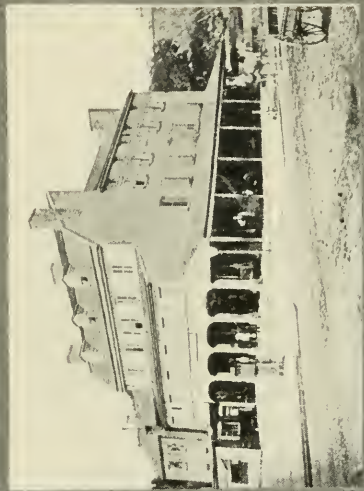
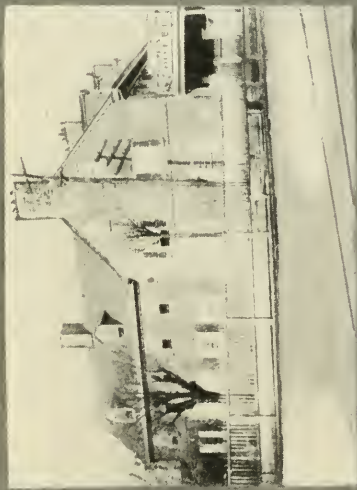
† Much information about the local ferries is to be found in “The Camden Mail” for July 23-30, 1844, and in Fiesler’s “A Local History of Camden.”

‡ Under the tax law of 1769, every ferry in the Colony was to be assessed at not less than ten shillings nor more than ten pounds.



1. Cooper's Point Ferry, 1845
2. Federal Street Ferry, 1875

3. Market Street Ferry about 1862
4. Kaighn's Point Ferry about 1880



Hotels connected with the early ferries

1. Cooper's Point Hotel, built 1770

3. Parson's Hotel, built 1764

the same county. Samuel Cooper built the ferry-house, afterwards known as Cooper's Point Hotel. In 1762, in order to attract the country trade, a road was laid out from the bridge over Cooper's creek at Spicer's Ferry to Cooper's Point, which afterwards became Main street on the Camden City plan. About 1800, the ferry was conveyed to William Cooper, by whom it was operated, or owned, until 1849. Among those who conducted the ferry during William Cooper's ownership was William Ridgeway, who in 1828 was elected as the representative of Cooper's Point in the first City Council of Camden. This ferry was long known as the "Upper Ferry," or "Upper Billy's Ferry," but, during its operation by William Cooper, became better known as "Uncle Billy's Ferry," and was a popular stopping place for travelers, particularly "Jerseymen."

He was wealthy, but, in the earlier days, saw to the starting of the boats himself and that the passengers would get aboard in time. To these early travelers, his familiar cry, "Over to Arch Street, All aboard, Over to Arch Street," was a welcome sound, while at the Arch street landing, the ferrymen would call out "Over to Billy Cooper's, All aboard."

"Uncle Billy" was recognized as the leader in all movements by the other ferry masters on both sides of the river. He always set the time when the steamboats were withdrawn and laid up for the Winter, or until every particle of ice had disappeared. A long-suffering community anxiously awaited the date when "Uncle Billy" again put his steamboats into service.

About 1813, William Cooper built the "Rebecca" (nicknamed the "Aunt Becky," or the "Wheelbarrow"). This boat was a novelty, because she had a wooden boiler with the staves clamped together with iron bands, like a barrel, and with iron flues, the water being contained in the wooden shell. The next boat appears to have been the "Citizen," about which little is known.

In July, 1829, it was announced that the team-boat "Independence" was running between William Ridgeway's ferry at Cooper's Point and Samuel Browning's ferry at Poplar Lane (Kensington).*

The ferry was owned by William Cooper until 1849, as already noted, when he transferred it to his son, Joseph W., who the following year incorporated the Cooper's Point Ferry Company with Joseph W. Cooper, William F. Reeve, Emmor Reeve, Isaac H. Wood, William Cooper, Benjamin W. Cooper, and William C. Champion—all closely connected with the Cooper family—as directors. It continued, how-

* The American Star and Rural Record, Nov. 18, 1829.

ever, to be operated under the direction of Joseph W. Cooper until 1854, when the Camden and Atlantic Railroad Company obtained possession. The latter company operated the ferry for about one year, when it again reverted to its former owners, who now formed a new corporation known as The Cooper's Point and Philadelphia Ferry Company, under authority of an act of the Legislature passed February 20, 1856. At this time the ferry slip was on the south side of the railroad track, at the foot of Vine street. This ferry house, familiar to some persons of the present day, was a very primitive affair. In the center was an open driveway for teams and persons to get on and off the boats, while on the lower side of this driveway, or slip, was a small waiting room, and on the upper side was a baggage room for use of the railroad.

The ferry was again purchased by the Camden and Atlantic Railroad Company on January 24, 1872, and operated in connection with its train service, until the control of the latter was obtained by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company on February 22, 1883. The price which the Camden and Atlantic Railroad paid for the ferry was \$76,800, and within the next year it expended an additional \$32,000 in repairs to the boats and slips. In 1880, the new ferry house at the foot of Wood street was built and slips were also provided for the recently acquired "Shackamaxon Street" boats as well as for a boat to run to Market street, Philadelphia.

During the early days of this ferry its landing on the Philadelphia side of the river was at some point in Kensington, probably about where the present Shackamaxon Ferry now lands, but this was changed to Arch street and later, on alternate trips, the boats landed at Arch street and Poplar street. From about 1855, the landings were all made at Vine street, Philadelphia,* except during a short time, about 1857, when a boat was also operated to the landing at the upper side of Market street. After the completion of the Camden and Atlantic Railroad, this ferry became the scene of much activity, being often called, "Philadelphia's Front Door to Atlantic City." In the light of present day ferry facilities, the editorial in the "West Jerseyman" of September 3, 1851, stating that on August 29th of that year the "Cooper's Point" was sunk by being overloaded with cattle, gives some idea as to the size and capacity of the ferry boats of that period.

Among the other boats operated on this line after it became a stock company were the "Cooper's Point" (the second of this name),

* Before the establishment of a ferry at Vine street, there was maintained there a public landing, known as Penny Pot Landing, so called from a tavern of the same name which then stood on the north side of Vine street near Water street.

built in 1853; the "Kensington,"* which ran to Poplar street, Philadelphia; the "Leo," built in 1855, the first boat to run to Vine street, Philadelphia; the "Tallaca," a boat 110 feet in length and 40 feet beam, built in 1858; the "Arasapha," built in 1860; the "Atlantic," built in 1865, and the "Cooper's Point" (the third boat of this name), built in 1879, and re-built in 1886, after it had been badly damaged by fire; the "Suffolk County," brought here from New York in 1895, but found, after a short time, to be unsuited for this service and returned to its home port. The "Arasapha" was the first ferry boat with a beam engine to operate on the Delaware river.

The Kensington and New Jersey Ferry Company was organized in 1866, by William Cramp, Jacob Neafie, Alexander Fox, Joseph F. Gillingham and Charles M. Lukens, to operate a ferry between North Point street, Camden, and Shackamaxon street, Philadelphia. The company began operating its first boat, the "Shackamaxon," on July 28, 1866. In May, 1880, this ferry was purchased by the Camden and Atlantic Railroad Company, and its landing in Camden combined with the ferry to Vine street, Philadelphia, as already noted.

The ferry at Cooper street was the oldest one on the river, its ferry privileges, according to Judge Clement,† having been granted to William Roydon, by the Court of Gloucester County in 1688. How long Roydon maintained the ferry is not known, but Mickle says it "seems to have gone down before 1695." In the latter year Daniel Cooper applied to the Gloucester Court for permission to establish a ferry over the Delaware river to Philadelphia. This was granted and the rates fixed at ten pence for a single passenger or six pence each when there were ten or more persons at one time, one shilling six pence for a man and horse, one shilling and three pence for a horse or cow and six pence per head for sheep, calves or hogs. Daniel Cooper died in 1715 and three years later the Pennsylvania Assembly passed an act "for erecting a ferry at or near the land of Daniel Cooper, deceased." The proprietor of this ferry on the Philadelphia side was Armstrong Smith. Under the terms of the Pennsylvania Act, Smith was given the exclusive privilege for seven years, and the rates of fares were specified not to exceed six pence for a single foot passenger, or four pence each when three or more crossed over at

* There was a ferry boat "Kensington" running between Camden and Philadelphia in 1841-42, but the writer has been unable to connect these two boats.

† Clement's "Early Settlers, etc.," p. 96. He says "The exact position of this ferry upon the river front is not now known; it was probably between Cooper street and Market street, as Roydon's survey extended but a short distance above the first named street." Many historians state that the Roydon ferry ran from Gloucester to Philadelphia (Wicacoe), but a careful reading of the Court license shows that it was to be "fixed and settled in some convenient and proper place between ye mouths or entrances of Cooper's creek and Newton creek."

the same time, while the rate for one horse and rider was one shilling six pence, or three or more in the party, one shilling. The privileges of this Act having expired, the Pennsylvania Assembly, in 1727, passed a law "for establishing a ferry from the City of Philadelphia to the Landing at or near the house of William Cooper" and placed the control of the ferries in the "Mayor and Commonalty of Philadelphia," requiring, however, that the ferrymen must live near the landing at High street and must not charge more than four pence for the passage of a single passenger, or if two or more are taken over at the same time, not more than three pence each. The rate for a single horse and rider was fixed at one shilling, but if two or more offered themselves on the same trip the charge was not to exceed nine pence each. The law prohibited any other ferry being established, except by the consent of the Mayor and Commonalty, within two miles of the landing at High street. Sylvanus Smout was selected as ferryman and worked in conjunction with William Cooper, but in 1735, when the former act had expired and a new one adopted, William Rawle, a brother-in-law of William Cooper, was granted a lease for seven years of the ferry privilege in Philadelphia and it remained in the Rawle family until 1769.

The title to the ferry on the New Jersey side remained in the Cooper family continuously from 1695 until its abandonment about 1850. In some of the old records it is called "Richard M. Cooper's Ferry," and in 1833, according to entries in the Gloucester County Road Books, it was known as "Abigail Cooper's Ferry."

The ferry was successively managed by Daniel Cooper, William Cooper, Richard M. Cooper, James Bispham, James Springer,* Benjamin Reeves, Ebenezer Toole and Joseph and Israel English. In 1739, the ferry of Daniel Cooper was assessed by the Board of Freeholders of Gloucester County ten shillings against a tax of six shillings for the ferry at Cooper's Point, showing that at that time this ferry was the more important one. In 1748, a license was granted to Daniel Cooper for a public house. This ferry is best known as "English's Ferry." The first steamboat on the Delaware, as already noted, is said to have been the "Camden," built by Daniel Large and James Bispham in 1810, and ran from Cooper street then kept by James Springer, to the lower side of High (or Market) street, Philadelphia. In 1812, the Philadelphia landing was transferred for a short time to the upper side of High street. Exactly how long the

* James Springer formerly was a tavern-keeper at the High street ferry, Philadelphia.

steam ferry-boat "Camden" was operated is not known. It is quite likely, however, that when the Pennsylvania and New Jersey Steamboat Company secured the exclusive rights to operate steamboats, as will be noticed in connection with the Kaighn's Point Ferry, the "Camden" was converted into a "team boat." In Paxton's Philadelphia Directory for 1819, mention is made of the "team boat Camden," and it is hardly probable that there were two boats of this name in operation at the same time.

In 1813, the "Accommodating Steamboat," the "Twins," of which Liba W. Kellum was captain, ran from Cooper street to Poole's Ferry at the upper side of High (Market) street, Philadelphia. The "Franklin," "Benjamin Rush" and "Lehigh" were built by Benjamin Reeves during his occupancy of this ferry. These were all double, or twin, boats with their wheels in the center, and were of the most crude construction, of slow speed and uncertain performance, as could be confirmed by many of the older residents, who were occasionally compelled to spend the greater portion of the night aboard them, while they struggled to get through the ice floes.

Benjamin Reeves gave up the ferry at Cooper street about 1820 and moved to the Federal street ferry, but in 1824 he took over the ferry at the upper side of Market street, Philadelphia. In the latter year he announced that he

"has added a Team Boat to his line of FERRY BOATS, plying from the upper side of Market street to Joseph English's ferry,* at Camden. This line now consists of two Steam Boats, on the low-pressure principle (operating by very low steam), one Team Boat, and several Wherry-Boats. By the employment of all these Boats on the same Line, the Subscriber feels fully warranted in assuring the Public that much facility will be given to passengers, and very little delay in waiting for Boats will occur, so that generally, as soon as one Boat leaves the wharf another will be ready to take her place."

After Reeves moved to Philadelphia, Ebenezer Toole conducted the ferry and hotel from 1820 to 1828 or '29. Soon after taking over the ferry Toole announced that the teamboat "Ridgeway" would run

* The English's ferry here mentioned is not the one commonly known by this name but refers to the ferry at the foot of Federal street and was conducted by Wessel and English from about 1824-1827. Joseph English was a man of considerable means, as is indicated by the assessment of 1835 of his interests in the ferry and other personal property amounting to about \$15,000, on which his tax was \$33.40, farm lands were not taxable. Israel English was at the same time returned by the assessors as a single man and was one of the three young men in the city holding taxable property.

to Charles H. Fish's lower side of Market street, Philadelphia.* It was while so occupied that he became active in the affairs immediately preceding the incorporation of the City of Camden. It was at his hotel that the first meeting was reputed to be held at which definite plans were adopted to petition the Legislature to set apart a portion of old Newton Township as a separate political unit of the State. This explains why he was elected as one of the first members of City Council to represent Camden, and not as a representative from Kaighn's Point, with which section he is most frequently connected.

When Toole bought the Kaighn's Point hotel and ferry, the ferry and hotel at Cooper street passed to Joseph English, who operated it until about 1838, when he was succeeded by his son Israel. It was during the English regime—father and son—that the Cooper street, or Middle Ferry, received its greatest impetus and reached its highest state of development. The ferry landing was then midway between the present Point street and Delaware avenue on the north line of the street.

In addition to the boats already mentioned, the "Vigilant" and "Delaware" were two others operated on the Cooper street line, the former seeing only a few weeks service, when it was burned to the water's edge (July 13, 1828),† while the boiler of the latter exploded in October, 1837, causing the death of two persons, but was rebuilt and remained in active service for a number of years. The "Vigilant," which belonged to Richard M. Cooper, was said to have cost eight thousand dollars.

During the greater part of the period when the Cooper street ferry was in operation, the boats ran to the lower side of Market street, Philadelphia, variously known as Thorne's, Fish's, Burr's, Scattergood's and Stockton's Ferry. Israel English and Hudson Burr announced, in 1840, that they had united in one line the steamboats "Delaware" and "Camden." The former was the second and the latter the fourth boat with these names. In 1843, Israel English advertised that his two boats would be operated in the future to Champion's Arch street ferry.

In the early days William Hope operated a wherry from the foot of Cooper street to the Philadelphia shore, but whether as an independent ferrymaster or as a boatman for English is unknown. He was of Herculean proportions and had a powerful voice. It is related of him that, such was the power of his lungs, he could be

* American Star, June 19, 1821.

† American Star and Rural Record, July 16, 1828.

heard distinctly, while standing on the Camden bank of the river, by persons on the Pennsylvania shore, and would shout to know if passengers were waiting for him and if the response was in the affirmative would push his wherry across to take his "fare."

At Market street there were two landings and consequently it is difficult to distinguish exactly which landing was used by the several ferrymen at this point.

A ferry was established by Abraham Browning, Sr., at the lower side of Market street about 1800, which he operated for about one year, and then leased to others, the ferry taking the names of its successive lessees. James Springer, who had been conducting the Cooper street ferry, appears to have been the first lessee and was followed by Peter Farrow, Benjamin Reeve, Benjamin Springer (1820-1829), Daniel Browning (1829-1830), William S. Paul (1830-1839), Thomas P. Clement (1839-1841), John Knisell (1841-1843), Joshua Hollingshead and Edward Browning. The latter managed the ferry for the heirs of Abraham Browning, Sr., until it was taken over by the West Jersey Ferry Company.

During Benjamin Springer's occupancy, the Washington Team Boat Company, of which he was treasurer, operated the "Washington" and, from the account books of this company, recently unearthed, we learn that it did a very profitable business. This ferry is best known as "Browning's Ferry," "Springer's Ferry," "Paul's Ferry," or "Middle Ferry." There has always been maintained a service to High (or Market) street, Philadelphia and during the incumbency of Paul and Hollingshead, also a line to Callowhill street.*

Daniel Browning, on April 21, 1829,† announced that he had leased the ferry formerly conducted by Benjamin Springer, and had procured the new steamboat "The Camden," which would be operated to Burr's ferry at the lower side of Market street, Philadelphia. Within six months, however, the new proprietor, on account of ill-health, offered the lease for sale, and on June 9, 1830, William S. Paul, the father of Mrs. James S. Cassady, became the lessee, and at once applied for a license to keep a tavern in the ferry hotel. This license was granted by City Council on July 1st.

In an advertisement appearing in the "Camden Mail" of March 15, 1843, it was stated that Joshua Hollingshead, who had succeeded

* According to the "Village Herald," (Woodbury) dated February 9, 1825, the Callowhill Street Ferry Company was organized in 1825 with Jonathan Roberts, President, and Reese Morris as Secretary. How soon it began operation and to what landing it first ran is unknown, but from subsequent events it is quite likely that Benjamin Springer looked after its interest on the Camden side of the river.

† American Star and Rural Record, Sept. 16, 1829.

to the ferry rights at Market street, would operate two boats to the landing at the lower side of Market street, Philadelphia, lately known as Scattergood's and now controlled by Stockton Brothers, and that the steamer "William Penn" would ply, as heretofore, to William S. Paul's at the foot of Callowhill street.* "They all land "end to" instead of "side to," as the steamers formerly did at the lower side of Market street."

Aside from the "team" and "horse" boats, of which their names are legion, the boats which have been most noted in the early days are the "William Penn," built in 1839, the "Farmer,"† built in 1843, and the "Southwark."

The West Jersey Ferry Company was incorporated in 1849, by the heirs of Abraham Browning, Sr., and at once began an aggressive movement to put this ferry in first-class shape, continuing to operate a line to Market street, Philadelphia, and another to Callowhill street in the Northern Liberties. The incorporation of this company was accomplished in spite of considerable opposition both from City Council and a large body of citizens. The chief objection to the charter was a section giving authority to the new company to construct wharves, slips and a ferry house at the foot of Market street, Camden, "by which the landing will be rendered useless to the city." This section vested the title to the foot of the street in the ferry company, although it had up to that time been acknowledged as belonging to the city. At that time, or shortly previous, the ferry house was in the old stone building which formerly stood on the east side of Front street below Market and the ferry landing midway between Front street and the present Delaware avenue. The flats which then extended to within one hundred and fifty feet of Front street, were filled up, Market street cut through to the river's edge and improved slips provided. This company also built the West Jersey Hotel, after which the old hotel on Front street was abandoned. In August, 1850, the proprietors announced that they would, during the Summer and Fall, run an all-night boat, and was the first one to inaugurate this service. About 1860, the land had been filled up to such an extent that a new ferry landing and ferry house was erected further westward. This ferry house, which was the first one on this side of the river to have a cover over the entire ferry slip, was used until 1876, when the new ferry house, familiar to all older residents, was rushed to completion in anticipation of the travel to the Centennial Exposition. One of

* Wm. S. Paul was granted a Tavern license by the Court of General Quarter Sessions for the city and county of Philadelphia on September 24, 1841.

† The American Eagle, January 21, 1843.

the principal innovations in the new ferry house was the large clock in the cupola, which was the first large tower clock to be installed in Camden.

In connection with the improvements which the company made during the "fifties" was the sub-dividing of the ferry seats by means of iron arms, to break up the habit which many of the passengers had of stretching out and taking comfortable naps on the seats during the trip across the river, and, in consequence of the number of seats occupied, compelling other passengers to stand. A woman correspondent in one of the "dailies" in 1858 censured the ferry company for installing these "iron bars" because it prevented those women who followed the fashion styles of the times from sitting down except "at the serious risk of the 'hoops' and the entire frustration of every gracefulness of position."

In order to attract and hold the trade of the farmers coming to market with their produce, the West Jersey Ferry Company opened a "Hay and Straw Market" on the south side of Market street, west of Delaware avenue, on January 2, 1871. This market was in constant use until 1901, when it was moved to the east side of Delaware avenue, between Arch and Market streets, and finally abandoned in 1917. In 1883, the Pennsylvania Railroad Company secured control of this ferry through the purchase of the stock of the "Brownings," Edward B. Roberts, and James B. Dayton, Esq., who was at the time president of the company. It was about this time that the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Company was making a fight for a share of the Atlantic City business, and the Pennsylvania feared the former might secure the West Jersey Ferry franchise for its recently acquired Atlantic City Railroad.

When the West Jersey took over the plant of the "Browning's Ferry," it acquired in addition to the three boats above named, the old ferry house, or hotel, on Front street and all the ground from Front street to the river, between Market and George streets. This company, during the year 1849, had built the new boats "Mariner" and "Merchant," the former at the "dock-yard" of William Cramp in Kensington and the latter at Cooper's Point.* This gave it a fleet of five ferry boats. The "Mariner" was burned at her wharf in Camden, in 1855, but during the following year was re-built by Captain John Bender and re-named the "Mechanic." The "William Penn" was re-built in 1857. The "Merchant" was in actual service until 1865, when she was taken off the line and kept in reserve. The

* The West Jerseyman, August 22, 1849.

second "Mariner" was built in 1862, and was at the time the largest ferry-boat on the Delaware. During the Rebellion she was sold to the Government and used to carry troops in the vicinity of Washington and finally, about 1881, was sunk in Chesapeake Bay. Following these came the "West Jersey," launched on September 27, 1864, and the "America," which was built on the flats then north of Market street, midway between Front street and Delaware avenue, and launched July 11, 1868. The "America" with the "Mechanic" and "West Jersey" constituted the equipment until the advent of the newer and more pretentious boats with which we are now familiar. The "Columbia" was built in 1876, the "Arctic" in 1879, and the "Baltic" in 1881.

About 1819 there was also a ferry house on the northwest corner of Front and Market streets. This ferry was operated by Randall Sparks and was known as "Sparks' Ferry." Sparks, in an advertisement in the "Gloucester Farmer," dated April 27, 1819,*

"informs his friends and patrons that he has opened a New Ferry in Market street near the Bank in Camden, where the best liquors and provender for man and beast shall always be in readiness with the most competent hostlers and best ferrymen."

The landing on the Philadelphia side was at the "Old Ferry,"† below Arch street, kept by Green and Anderson, and they announced in September, 1819,‡ that they would continue to carry passengers at 6¼ cents. There does not appear to be any information available as to the names of the boats operated, but they were most likely of the team-boat and horse-boat class.§

When Joseph Latuorno established Vauxhall Garden, in 1818, he ran a boat called the "Minette" for about one year, from the upper side of Market street, Camden, to the "Old Slip" between Market and Arch streets, Philadelphia, for the accommodation of his patrons. When the traffic warranted, this boat was operated during the evenings, which was a decided innovation, as all of the regular ferry lines ceased operation at sun down.

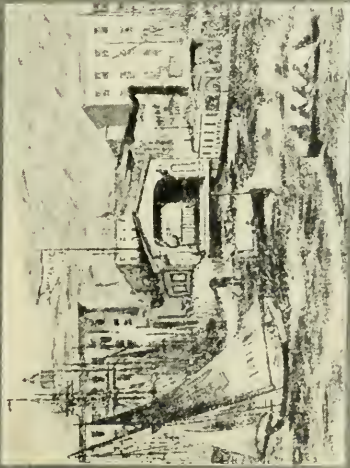
The ferry at the foot of Federal street was started by Daniel Cooper about 1764, shortly after he had received one hundred acres of land along the river from his father, William Cooper, of Phila-

* See also "ad" of the same date in "The Gloucester Farmer" of July 28, 1819.

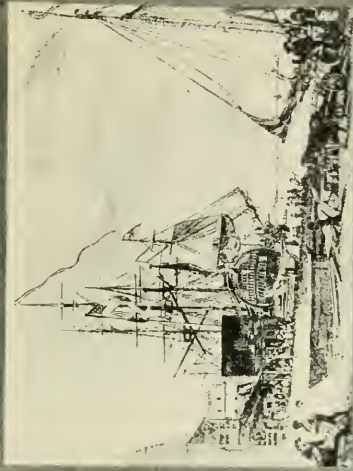
† This slip was called also Rawle's or Peel's ferry landing.

‡ "The Gloucester Farmer" of Sept. 10, 1819.

§ It was at a meeting held at Randall Sparks' ferry house on December 10, 1819, that the people of Camden first publicly expressed their opinion on the slavery question. The resolutions adopted endorsed the limiting of the extension of slavery and prohibiting its introduction into any new States which might thereafter be admitted into the Union.



1. Vine street ferry, Philadelphia, 1873



3. Arch street ferry, Philadelphia, 1800



2. Market street ferry, Philadelphia, 1830



4. Scene on Delaware River, Winter of 1856

delphia. He built the brick building later known as "Toy's," "Cake's," or "Parsons" Hotel, and for many years used as a ferry house. Daniel being a strict Quaker refused to permit the sale of liquor in his hotel. It was the only temperance hotel, during his day, along the river front. This was an unheard of innovation, for at that time, drinking was almost universal, and his adherence to this policy called down on him much adverse criticism from the travelers and stage drivers. From Daniel the property passed to his son, Joshua, about 1770, who conducted it until 1803 or 1804. It was then leased to Richard Thorne "for a term of eight years" and at the expiration of the lease Joshua Cooper placed its management in the hands of his son, William. About this time it got the name of "Lower Billy's Ferry," to distinguish it from "Upper Billy's" at Cooper's Point. Some time prior to 1820 the property was sold to John Wessel,* who a few years later conveyed it to his son, Samuel D. Wessel, and from the latter the title passed to Jacob Ridgway in 1832. Under the Wessel ownership the ferry was run by Joseph Wilde, Benjamin Reeves, English & Wessel and Isaiah Toy. Of the former little is known except that his boats were all of the "team boat" class. When Benjamin Reeves moved from the Cooper street ferry, about 1820, he took with him the steamboats "Lehigh" and "Benjamin Rush." The former sank suddenly at her dock at Federal street after landing a large load of passengers, but was subsequently raised and operated.

There has been much confusion regarding the two Reeves—Benjamin and Isaac. According to the Philadelphia Directory of 1821, Benjamin Reeves was at that time located in Camden, while in 1830 he is listed as at Market street wharf, Philadelphia. Isaac Reeves is given as the proprietor of the old Market street ferry house, Philadelphia, the same year. In 1838, Joseph Cooper, formerly of Cape May, announced that he had become proprietor of the recently completed Ridgway House at Market street and Delaware avenue, Philadelphia, "on the site of the old ferry house, known as Reeves' Ferry."

In March, 1828, Samuel D. Wessel offered "A VALUABLE ESTABLISHED FERRY" for sale,† stating that "it was formerly known as 'Reeves' and 'English's' ferry and now by name of 'Wessel's,' ferry and at present occupied by Isaiah Toy." The ferry equipment consisted of two steamboats, besides horse-boats and wherries and was operating from Federal street, Camden, to the

* John Wessel was born in 1772 and died in 1827. Together with his wife, Eleanor, who died in 1798 at the age of 28 years, he was buried in the Wood Burying Ground near the old Pavonia Water Works.

† American Star and Rural Record, July 16, 1828.

landing at the upper side of Market street, Philadelphia, formerly kept by Benjamin Reeves and later by Isaac Reeves. The property to be included in the sale "consisted of a large three-story brick dwelling and ferry-house, a convenient two-story back building and kitchen, together with a large garden, pleasure yard, stable and out building" ("Parson's Hotel"). Isaiah Toy took the management of this ferry in March, 1828.*

Benjamin Reeves and Isaiah Toy were partners in the ferry and hotel business from 1828 to 1835, the former conducting the hotel at the upper side of Market street, Philadelphia, while the latter kept the hotel, subsequently known as Parson's Hotel, at the foot of Federal street. In 1828, they built the "William Wray"† and "Philadelphia" (nicknamed the "Old Philly"‡). John Knisell, who succeeded Isaiah Toy in 1838, continued to operate both the "Public House and Ferry" until 1840 or 1841, having, in the meantime formed a partnership with Isaac Reeves, who controlled the ferry house and landing at the upper side of Market street, Philadelphia. Reeves & Knisell, in December, 1839, advertised under the caption "Winter Ferrying," that "they had placed the powerful Winter boat, the "Hornet," at their ferry between Camden and the upper side of Market street, and having completed every other requisite arrangement to ensure a safe as well as a speedy passage across the river during the ice season, they flatter themselves that they will be thereby enabled to afford the most complete accommodation to every description of passengers."

The Camden and Philadelphia Steamboat Ferry Company was incorporated on March 5, 1836, by Joseph Kaighn, Samuel Laning, Gideon V. Stivers, John W. Mickle, Richard Fetters, Samuel Harris, Isaac Vansciver, Isaac Cole and William Carman, who also constituted its first board of directors. Among the provisions of its charter were: (a), that a line of boats between Camden and Philadelphia was to be kept running *all the year*; (b), that the rate of fare for each passenger in the Spring, Summer and Fall should not exceed five cents on the steamboats, or ten cents in wherries, and maximum rates to be charged for wagons, and sundry articles of freight should not exceed those specified in the act, and that the

* New Jersey Chronicle, Mt. Holly, April 7, 1828.

† William Wray was the owner of the hotel and ferry house at the foot of Market Street (north side), Philadelphia. His estate sold this property to Isaac Reeves in March, 1835, for \$60,000. He was a very popular grocer who had a store in 1801 at 5, 7 and 11 Market Street, Philadelphia.

‡ The "Philadelphia" was in constant service until about 1846, and during its last years was, on account of its dilapidated condition, the target for much complaint, and the company censured for allowing the old and inefficient boat on the ferry line.

Winter rates should not exceed double these rates; (c), that the City of Camden should have the right to subscribe to one hundred shares of the capital stock of the company and, if the town meeting accepted this provision, the city was authorized to select one of the nine directors of the corporation; (d), that the franchise unless renewed by the Legislature was void after thirty years.

The City of Camden at a special Town Meeting, held on August 4, 1836, voted against accepting the right to subscribe to the capital stock, the resolution to this end being offered by Philip J. Gray, of the "Camden Mail." The Camden and Amboy Railroad Company, in 1837 or '38, subscribed to 1,271 shares at a par value of \$63,550, paying for it by transferring its boats, the "States Rights" and "John Fitch," the tavern house, known as "Railroad Hotel," and later as "Elwell's Hotel," together with the slips and docks, and a number of lots adjoining the ferry. From the transportation standpoint the principal assets in this deal were the two ferry boats, which had been built by the Camden and Amboy to convey its train passengers across the river. The "States Rights" was a very powerful boat, constructed especially to carry out the charter provision to maintain a Winter service, and soon became known as the "Ice Breaker," because of its ability to plow through the heavy fields of ice during the time of the year that the other steamboats were compelled to stop running. During the period just preceding the Civil War, the name was changed to the "United States Rights."

Upon the organization of the new ferry company, the railroad entered into a contract with it for the transportation of train passengers and certain classes of freight across the river. For each train passenger, the ferry company was to be paid five cents in Summer and ten cents in Winter, while for every hundred pounds of freight carried between Camden and Philadelphia the rate was six cents.

The Camden and Philadelphia Steamboat Company began operations in May, 1838, having its termini at Bridge avenue, Camden, and just below Chestnut street, Philadelphia. About two years later, through a special act of the Pennsylvania Legislature (April 11, 1840), the company was authorized to hold real estate in Philadelphia not exceeding an assessed valuation of \$200,000 (increased to \$300,000 in 1843), and immediately purchased the Lafayette Block at the foot of Walnut street. Reserving enough land for a ferry building and hotel, the Ferry Company transferred the balance of the land to the Camden and Amboy for a freight station. The hotel was long known as "Bloodgood's," and until 1862, the parlor of the

hotel was used as the waiting room for the railroad passengers. In the latter year a waiting room was erected on the Walnut street wharf.

When the new company took hold of the ferry it found that the long detours necessary to get around Windmill Island,* which lay in the mid-channel directly between its landings on the Camden and Philadelphia sides, was a serious handicap to quick transportation of the train passengers. On February 14, 1838, the Pennsylvania Legislature granted the Ferry Company the right to cut a canal across the island, the lower part of which, thereafter, was known as Windmill Island, while the upper portion was called Smith's Island, after a family by that name who had long owned it, and later was known as Ridgway Park. Work on this project was commenced under the supervision of Charles Loss, as engineer, in 1838, and entirely completed during March, 1840, although it had been used by boats of the Federal street line in October, 1839. The act provided that when the canal was completed and made navigable, it should be a public highway, subject to toll-charges to be fixed by the County Board of Philadelphia, the company being required to file with the County Commissioners of Philadelphia a detailed account of the cost of construction within sixty days after it was opened for navigation. Formal announcement of the opening of the canal was withheld by the company, with the object of preventing its use by the boats of rival ferries, thus making it more difficult and expensive for them to operate. To further cripple its rivals, the Camden and Philadelphia Steamboat Ferry Company, in 1852, reduced the ferry fare to three cents, compelling the others to follow suit, even though they could ill afford the cut. This rate continued until the settlement of the Windmill Canal controversy, when the fare was again put back to five cents.† Charges and counter charges were made by the rival factions in the canal controversy and the papers of that day were filled with advertisements and communications setting forth the claims of the two companies most directly interested.

The West Jersey Ferry Company waited until 1852 for the required public announcement, and then, under advice of Abraham Browning, began operating their boats through the canal, leaving the question of toll charges to be fought out later. This resulted in a law suit which was settled January 2, 1854, through an agreement whereby the Camden and Philadelphia Steamboat Ferry Company conveyed

* Windmill Island was in the early days merely a shoal reaching from Cooper's Point southward. The lower portion by accretions gradually became high land, and in 1746 Harding and Son erected a hexagonal windmill on it and from this fact it took its name.

† The Constitution, Woodbury, Dec. 21, 1852.

To Quarterly Passengers
AT THE
CAMDEN FERRIES.

The Ferry Masters have found it necessary to adopt the following Regulations, which will be strictly adhered to, viz :

Quarterly Passengers will be charged **One Dollar** each ; the quarters beginning on the

1st SEPTEMBER,
1st DECEMBER,

1st MARCH,
1st JUNE.

No reduction will be made for a fractional part of a quarter, and no ticket will be sold for less than one dollar.

Persons, therefore, wishing the full benefit of crossing quarterly, should apply on the first of the quarter.

By order of the Ferry Masters.

Camden, Sept. 1, 1844.

Dabern and Ferry
ESTABLISHMENT

THE Subscriber begs leave to inform his friends and the public in general, that he has taken the

**FERRY ESTABLISHMENT
AT CAMDEN,**

Formerly occupied by BENJAMIN REEVER, and lately by JOSEPH ENGLISH and SAMUEL D. WESSEL, and which is connected by

A LINE OF STEAM BOATS,

With the Ferry now occupied by ISAAC REEVES, on the upper side of Market-street, Philadelphia, where it his determination by a strict and constant attention, to afford every accommodation and satisfaction to those who may favour him with their custom.

ISAIAH TOY.

March 22d 1828--26-1f

☐ The Causeway and Bridge over Newton creek, are again passable.

VILLAGE HERALD & WEEKLY ADVERTISER

G R E A T R E D U C T I O N



or



F e r r i a g e .

THE subscribers give notice to the public, that they have reduced the ferrriage on board their boats plying between the UPPER SIDE OF MARKET STREET AND CAMDEN, to the following rates—

Two cents for each foot passenger, and

Twelve and a-half cents for Carriages of every description.

The public may depend upon every attention at our Ferry, and should a further reduction of rates take place, they may depend upon our services at the cheapest of those who may be cheapest.

REEVES & KNISELL.

Camden, April 6, 1840.—81f

CAMDEN MAIL

to the West Jersey Ferry Company a one-half interest in the canal and the franchise pertaining thereto, upon the latter paying its portion of the cost. By a joint deed delivered April 21, 1894, the companies, now both controlled by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, conveyed all of their rights in this canal to the Federal Government, then about to begin the removal of the islands through which it passed.

With the advent of the Camden and Philadelphia Steamboat Ferry Company, an aggressive campaign was begun by it to secure a monopoly of the ferry business between the two cities. A public announcement was made that it had commenced operating boats between Walnut street, Philadelphia, and their wharf in Camden, at the "Reduced rates of Fare contained in their Charter." This reduction was immediately met by the old ferry masters and a bitter "rate war" was started. Notices of reduction in ferriage appeared in rapid succession. In April, 1840, Reeves & Knisell, for the ferry between Federal street and the upper side of Market street, Philadelphia, and Israel English, Thomas P. Clements and Hudson Burr for the ferries from Market and Cooper streets, Camden, to the lower side of Market street, Philadelphia, advertised that the rate of ferriage would be "two cents for each passenger" and "twelve and one-half cents for carriages of every kind" and on June 3, 1840, Reeves & Knisell made a further reduction as follows: "Each waggon drawn by one or more horses, loaded or unloaded, five cents."

As a further means of curbing the activities of the new competitor, the old ferries, in 1838, refused to accept the "quarterly tickets" of the Camden and Philadelphia Ferry. This was in direct conflict with the long established custom of carrying each other's "quarterly passengers" free of charge, and brought forth a bitter reply in the newspapers from the new company.*

In order to eliminate this competition, which threatened to make the operation of the Camden and Philadelphia Steamboat Ferry Company unprofitable, an offer was made by it to Jacob Ridgway for the purchase of the ferry houses and equipment owned by him, which at that time was one of the two most formidable competitors.

* According to an advertisement in the West Jersey Press of May 24, 1865, the rates of ferriage on all of the ferries to Philadelphia on and after June would be as follows:

Regular fare for each adult passenger.....	5c
For each child between 4 and 12 years of age.....	2c
Package tickets, 34 passages on day and night boats and good on any ferry.....	\$1.00
Six months commutation tickets, on day boats only, and good only on the ferry issuing the same.....	\$5.00

The rate of fare on all the ferry boats between Camden and Philadelphia was on January 1, 1880, reduced to three cents a trip, or nine tickets for twenty-five cents. On August 26 1920, the fare was raised to four cents a trip, or eight tickets for thirty cents.

This purchase took place in August, 1840, and included the ferry property and tavern houses at Market street and at Arch street, Philadelphia, as well as the ferry hotel, landing and other property at Federal street, Camden, involving an expenditure of about three hundred thousand dollars. There was also included in the sale, the tavern property at Bloomsbury (South Trenton), the steamboat "Hornet" as well as the steamboats "William Wray" and "Philadelphia," operated by Reeves and Knisell, who were tenants of Ridgway.

With the purchase of the various Ridgway properties the individual ferrymen were put out of business. The ferry hotel was conducted by various proprietors and the ferry itself was frequently known by the name of the tavern-keeper. Knisell was the last of the proprietors of the ferry hotel, who was also interested in the operation of the ferry boats. He was succeeded in March, 1841, by R. C. Cake as proprietor of the hotel, but the latter did not have any part in the running of the boats, notwithstanding the location was for some time known as "Cake's Ferry."

All of these improvements and expenditures had been such a heavy drain on the resources of the ferry company that no dividends were paid until about 1849. In that year those stockholders who were not interested in the railroad company, which was particularly benefited by the several outlays, demanded some returns on their investment, and finally an arrangement was made whereby a dividend of five dollars a share was declared. In order to meet this payment, and to convert into cash a portion of the non-productive assets, the Ferry Company began to gradually dispose of some of its property. In 1850, it sold back to the railroad company the "Railroad Hotel" and to numerous citizens, lots adjacent to the ferry house.

In Camden, the regular landing for all except train passengers was soon changed to the north side of Federal street, the slips being located midway between Front street and the present Delaware avenue. The landing at the old railroad dock on the north line of Bridge avenue was now only used when trains arrived or departed. At the foot of Federal street there was a wharf called the "Long Wharf," which was used by the boats when the tide was too low for them to come to the regular landing.

In 1863, the Ferry Company began making an extensive "fill" at the foot of Federal street, by which the street was extended four hundred feet westward. Upon the land so reclaimed, a new ferry house and slips were built, which, with minor changes, were used until

the present ferry house was completed. The work on the ferry building in Camden, now in use, was started in January, 1900, and the structure and adjacent slips finished and used for the first time on June 24, 1901. The Philadelphia landing was retained at Walnut street until 1872, when a ferry house was built at the upper side of Market street.

The original ferry equipment, consisting of the "States Rights," "William Wray," "Philadelphia" and "John Fitch," was soon followed by the "Camden," the fifth boat of this name, built in 1844 or 1845, at the shops of "Camden Iron Boat and Steam Boiler Works" of Jesse W. Starr, then located on Bridge avenue below Second street, adjoining the depot of the Camden and Amboy Railroad. Her engines and boilers were taken out of the old "Philadelphia." She was the second iron boat built on the Delaware river, the first one being the "Appoquinnock," constructed in 1843. When the "Camden" was launched some of the older people asserted that she would go to the bottom—that her hull could not float, and many of those daring enough to stay on board during the launching put on life preservers. The next addition to the fleet was the ill-fated "New Jersey," built about 1836 for Robert W. Sykes, after he had purchased the Gloucester Ferry, and sold by him to the Federal Street Ferry, because she was too small for the Gloucester line.

The ferry boat "New Jersey" was run between Federal street, Camden, and Walnut street, Philadelphia, for a number of years. On Saturday, March 15, 1856, she was running as a night boat on this line and left the Walnut street wharf about 8 P. M. The river was full of heavy floating ice and she had a hard time to make the canal between the two islands. While in the canal the boat was discovered to be on fire and the crew then endeavored to run back to the slip at Walnut street. The boat got out of the canal, the fire, in the meantime, burning fiercely, but the tide swept her up-stream and the captain then headed under full steam for Arch street wharf. She just touched the wharf when pilot house and engine room burst into flames, compelling the engineer and pilot to leave their posts and spreading consternation and terror among the passengers. Before the boat could be made fast to the wharf she was caught by the ice floes and, being unmanageable, was carried out into mid-stream heading towards the opposite shore, the people, in the meantime, trying to save themselves by jumping on cakes of ice, or into the water. The boat finally sunk in the New Jersey channel opposite Pearl street.

There were over one hundred passengers aboard when the boat

left Walnut street, of whom over sixty were drowned or burned to death. Of those who were saved many suffered untold hardships before rescuing parties could reach them. Mourning reigned throughout the city as the bodies of the victims were slowly recovered.

The action of the State authorities, in connection with the burning of the "New Jersey," brought out very strongly the agreement of 1783 between the States of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, wherein it was provided that in criminal cases the offenders were to be tried in the State in which first arrested, or prosecuted. The directors and officers of the ferry company were promptly placed under arrest by the Prosecutor of Camden County, who had been appointed to this office through the influence of those connected with the railroad. These officials thus came under the jurisdiction of the New Jersey State Courts. Inquests were held by the Coroner's juries for both Philadelphia and Camden, the verdict of the former being that the deaths were the result of criminal negligence on the part of the company in operating a boat that was entirely unfit for the transportation of passengers, while the Camden jury practically exonerated these officials. These diverse verdicts led to a wordy controversy in the newspapers and to the publication of several pamphlets on the subject, one in particular, entitled, "Startling Truths Relating to the Burning of the 'New Jersey,'" being extremely severe on the officers and directors of the ferry company. The Grand Jury of Camden County refused, however, to return any indictments in the case. This catastrophe proved a serious set-back to the growth of Camden and caused a material, though temporary, decline in local real estate values.

The next boats were the "Mary" and "Dido," built between the years 1851 and 1853. They were, at the time, the finest boats on the river and a considerable improvement over their predecessors. The "Mary" was re-built in 1862 and lengthened to 223 feet. The "Dido" was equipped with a steam "calliope," which it was soon found necessary to remove because the shrill noises frightened the horses on board. The "Delaware," built in 1864, was the next addition to the fleet. This boat was re-built in 1875-76 and provided with an upper deck and cabin, after the plan of the ferry boats in the New York Harbor. The second cabin, proving unsuited for local travel, was removed in 1878. The next boats were the "Philadelphia" and "Camden," built in 1866; the "Pennsylvania," launched in 1874; the "Beverly" and "Wenonah," built in 1882; the "Camden," built in 1896; the "Hammonton," built in 1906; the "Wildwood," put into service in 1911; the "Salem" and "Bridgeton," built in 1913.

Under an agreement dated January 2, 1899, and filed on April 1, 1899, both the Camden and Philadelphia Steamboat Ferry Company and the West Jersey Ferry Company were merged into the Philadelphia and Camden Ferry Company, but the lines were operated separately until January 23, 1901.*

There was still another ferry landing at Federal street, prior to 1800, which was known as "Wright's," or the "Lower Ferry." This was established by Joseph Wright, of Philadelphia, in 1786, and ran from Robert Waln's Wharf, below the Drawbridge, stopping at Windmill Island where the promoter had erected a half-way house and announced that "passengers would always meet with a hearty welcome and a hospitable fire in the cold season to warm and refresh themselves, while waiting for an opportunity of evading those large fields of ice which generally float up and down with the tide and obstruct the passage during the winter." Little else seems to be known about this ferry.

In 1765, Arthur Donaldson, brother-in-law of Joseph Kaighn, announced that he had opened a ferry to accommodate "all Gentlemen, Travellers, etc., passing from Point Pleasant† in New Jersey, to Philadelphia, and the District of Southwark, opposite to it. This ferry was operated in conjunction with the tavern or inn of Margaret Donaldson, known as the "Sign of Admiral Keppel," located between Old Swedes' Church and the fort on the river. In 1767, Arthur Donaldson‡ offered for sale a valuable water lot and wharf "in the District of Southwark" and said that "it is very convenient whereon to erect a Ferry (for which it is now used), it being opposite the ferry lately erected in New Jersey." How long this ferry was continued, the records do not disclose, but from subsequent events it was probably abandoned at the beginning of the Revolution, and for the next thirty-five years this section of the present Camden was without any regular ferry accommodations.

The first regular ferry to be continuously operated from Kaighnton to Philadelphia was established by Joseph Kaighn in 1809, when he placed a passenger boat in service. About the same time, he leased the old house at the southeast corner of Front street and

* As indicating the growth of the ferry traffic, the following figures quoted from "The New Republic" are interesting:

The Camden and Philadelphia Steamboat Ferry Co. carried in 1867, 2,200,000 passengers, including passengers on the West Jersey and Pemberton trains.

The West Jersey Ferry Co. in the same period carried 740,726 passengers.

The Cooper's Point Ferry carried 202,262 passengers including those for the Atlantic City trains.

These figures are exclusive of the free passengers carried.

† Point Pleasant was another name for what is to-day known as Kaighn's Point.

‡ The Pennsylvania Chronicle, June 1, 1767.

Kaighn avenue to Christopher Medara, who established therein the "South Ferry Hotel." It is not definitely known whether Medara had any direct interest in the operation of the ferry, but from the fact that the subsequent lease of the ferry privilege was made by Joseph Kaighn it is to be assumed that Medara's interest therein was merely nominal, if any. The landing in South Camden was at the foot of what afterwards became known as Ferry street, which started at a point on Kaighn avenue one hundred feet west of Second street and touched the river just south of the present Kaighn avenue, while the landing in Philadelphia was at the foot of Queen street (Southwark). In 1815, the Pennsylvania and New Jersey Steamboat Company was chartered by both States and leased this ferry privilege from Joseph Kaighn for a term of ninety-nine years, upon the condition that the lease should be invalid if a ferry was not maintained by the lessor. The company secured from Messrs. Fulton and Livingston, who claimed the sole right of running steamboats in the United States, the exclusive privileges for the Delaware river within five miles of Kaighn's Point, thus restricting all other ferries to the use of "team boats," until the claim of Fulton and his associates was overthrown by the United States Supreme Court. The company immediately built and put into service the "Union," a double-hull boat similar to the "John Smith," which in later years ran to Smith's Island. At that time it was probably the most complete ferry boat on the river. The landing in Philadelphia was first at Washington street (Southwark), and later at South street. The company soon got into financial difficulty and was compelled to take off the "Union." In order, however, to retain its lease a small boat called the "Norristown," originally built in 1821, to run on the Schuylkill from Philadelphia to Norristown,* was put into operation. Exactly when this company ceased its activities is not known, but from an announcement made by its secretary, J. Y. Bryant, in November, 1823, we learn that its steamboat was running from South Street Ferry to Kaighn's Point at that time.†

In 1821 the widow of Clement Reeves‡ purchased the hotel property and claimed the ferrying privileges attached thereto. This was resisted through the courts, but was finally decided in her favor on the ground that the ferry had been practically abandoned. In con-

* See Poulson's "Daily Advertiser," May 11, for an account of this boat.

‡ The Gloucester Herald, Nov. 26, 1823.

† In the Philadelphia Directory for 1817, Clement Reeves was listed as an inn and ferry keeper at the north side of High street wharf, Philadelphia. He died in 1819 of yellow fever and was succeeded by his widow, Sarah, who continued its operation until 1821.

junction with her sons, Israel and Joseph, she operated the ferry until 1828, when it was sold, together with the hotel, to Ebenezer Toole, by whom it was conducted until his death in 1851, and by his heirs until 1852, and then conveyed to the South Camden Ferry Company.* As late as 1852, the ferry boats landed within a few hundred yards of the hotel. In 1829 Toole advertised† that the Kaighn's Point Steamboat Ferry was operating two steamboats between South street, Philadelphia, and the "Point."

Toole was a brother-in-law of Richard Fetters and formerly lived in Philadelphia. He is first noticed in connection with Camden affairs when he took over the operation of the Cooper street ferry in 1820. As already noted he was very active in civic matters and throughout a long career was a useful and energetic citizen. He died July 9, 1851, aged 67 years.

The Reeves', during their regime, built the "New Jersey," nicknamed the "Scrubbing Brush," or "The Trutle," because of its extreme slowness. Shortly after Toole acquired the ferry, he built the "Kaighn's Point" and "William Champion." William Champion, who conducted the hotel at the foot of South street, Philadelphia, soon became a partner in the ferry to Kaighn's Point and continued as such until 1841, when Toole bought out his interest. The landing on the Philadelphia side was at South street, while on the Camden side it was still just below the present Kaighn avenue.

In August, 1851, public notice was given that after the 22d instant the rates of ferriage between Kaighn's Point and South street would be as follows:

Two horse wagons, of every description	25	cts.
One " " " " " "	20	"
Foot passengers over ten years old	3	"
" " " five and under ten years.	2	"
Children under four years of age, no charge.		

The South Camden Ferry Company was organized on March 4, 1851, by Charles Kaighn, William Griffith and Joseph M. Kaighn, and took over the Toole property. The new ferry company used the old landing at Ferry street for a short time, when, through an agreement with the City of Camden, it secured the use of the foot of Kaighn's avenue for a ferry landing, conditioned upon the payment

* Under the will of Sarah Reeves, title to the property passed to her children, Israel, Joseph, Ann and Sarah. On January 3, 1828, Israel Reeve, as executor, transferred the same to Ebenezer Toole. The latter dying intestate, the title was vested in Matilda, Paulin, Julia Toole Couzens and Elma Toole, who on June 22, 1852, executed a deed to the South Camden Ferry Co.

† "American Star and Rural Record," Jan. 29, 1829.

of an annual rental of one dollar a year. In 1853, the company built a new wharf at the foot of this street, which with its filling extended five hundred feet into the river. Ferry street was vacated by an ordinance adopted November 29, 1853. The ferryboat "Stephen Girard" was now built by the new proprietors and with the "William Champion" furnished the ferrying facilities for South Camden.

The South Camden Company was unable to stand the financial strain which its many improvements involved, and in 1858, Henry B. Wilson and Joseph M. Kaighn were appointed receivers. They operated the ferry for the creditors and stockholders for several years and were largely instrumental in organizing the Kaighn's Point and Philadelphia Ferry Company to take over the old company. The new corporation was formed March 15, 1859, with Joseph M. Kaighn, Stephen Coulter, Joel Bodine, George Browning, Henry Allen, John Cooper and Charles Kaighn as incorporators. The new company had some difficulties in completing the sale of its stock and it was not until June, 1861, that the formal transfer of the ferry property was made to William Griffith and Henry B. Wilson, as agents for the new owners. The consideration was \$30,000.

The "Rebecca Howell" was built for the Kaighn's Point Ferry in 1868, using the engine formerly in the "Stephen Girard," in the new boat, and was in active service until about 1876. The next addition to the ferry equipment was the "Eagle," purchased from the United States Government in 1866 or '67. The boat had formerly belonged to the Red Bank Ferry Company and ran between South street, Philadelphia, and Red Bank, New Jersey. The boats running to Kaighn's Point in 1869 were the "William Champion," "Rebecca Howell" and "Eagle." The next boat was the "Agnes," equipped with the engine out of the "Eagle," and launched in 1872.

In the summer of 1873 Brown Brothers & Co. purchased from Zopher C. Howell and William Griffith a controlling interest in the ferry company, and at their request Mr. Howell, who had been president for many years, was prevailed upon to continue in the same capacity under the new owners, and Charles B. Coles was made superintendent. The stock purchased by Brown Brothers was placed in the name of J. S. Schultz, who was also president of the Manchester and Camden Railroad Company. The new owners at once began making extensive improvements, including new boats and terminals. The boats added were the "General J. S. Schultz," launched in 1875, and the "Colorado" (now the "Atlantic City"), built in 1883.

The original capital stock of the Kaighn's Point Ferry Company

was very small, and after Brown Brothers had made the extensive improvements, they organized the Delaware River Ferry Company with a larger capitalization, the new company taking over all the holdings in the old corporation. On March 12, 1888, the Philadelphia and Reading Railway Company purchased the Brown Brothers & Co.'s interests in the ferry company.

With the transfer of the ferry to the Reading interests, the Kaighn's Point line added another boat to its fleet, the "F. P. James," and during the summer of 1888 two additional boats, called "Peconic" and "America," making five in all for the South and Chestnut street ferries—"General J. S. Schultz," "Colorado," "F. P. James," "Peconic," "America," with one boat, the "Agnes," in reserve. The "Agnes" was sold about 1889 or '90, and the "Peconic" and "America" about 1890 or '91.

Of the ferry boats so familiar to the travelers of the present day, the "City of Reading" was built in 1889, the "Philadelphia" was put in commission in 1896, the "Cape May" in 1901, the "Ocean City" in 1903, the "Mauch Chunk" in 1906 and the "Delaware" in 1914. The "Mauch Chunk" was built in 1893 for the Central Railroad of New Jersey and purchased and put into commission on the Kaighn's Point Ferry in the year above named.

The ferry house at Kaighn's Point was rebuilt in 1879-1880, and was used until burned down in 1891. On January 3, 1914, fire again visited the ferry house and entirely consumed it, necessitating the erection of the temporary structure used since that time.

The next ferry was at the foot of Bulson street, and was started in 1877, upon the completion of the Philadelphia and Atlantic City Railroad, to transfer its train passengers to Pier 8, below Chestnut street, Philadelphia. The sidewheel steamboat "Pilot Boy" was the first boat used, and the "F. P. James," a double-deck ferry boat brought here from New York, the last. This ferry was abandoned, except as a car-ferry, upon the Reading Company securing control of the Camden, Gloucester and Mt. Ephraim Railroad which gave it trackage rights to the Kaighn's Point Ferry.

In May, 1889, a ferry was started from the foot of Cooper avenue (now Twenty-seventh street), to Otis street, Philadelphia, for the accommodation of those residents of the North Cramer Hill section employed in the industrial establishments in the Kensington district of Philadelphia. The originator of this ferry was John Morgan. A few years later the North Cramer Hill Ferry Company was organized and Patrick Handbury became associated with Morgan

in the project. John Morgan died in 1917 and his son, James, took his place in the company. For over twenty-five years the little steamer "Riverside," of honored memory, carried the passengers on this line, there never being any facilities for vehicular travel provided. After the parks on the East Side and along Fish House Cove ceased to be profitable and were closed up the ferry was abandoned. In 1921 regular ferry service was again resumed to Otis street, Allegheny avenue and Arch street, Philadelphia.

While outside the present city limits it is interesting to note that as early as 1859 an unsuccessful attempt was made to organize and operate a ferry from Pea Shore Cove (Fish House) to Philadelphia. This project was to be known as the Pea Shore Ferry Company.

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